



PHALACROCORAX HYPOLEUCUS.

PHALACROCORAX HYPOLEUCUS.

Pied Cormorant.

Phalacrocorax pica, Forster's Drawings in Brit. Mus.

Pelecanus varius, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 890.—Gmel. Linn., vol. i. p. 576.

Pied Shag, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. vi. p. 605.—Cook's Voy., vol. i. p. 151.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 428.

Carbo hypoleucus, Brandt, Bull. de l'Acad. de St. Pet.

Ma-dee, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Black and White Shag, Colonists of Western Australia.

I FIRST observed this fine Cormorant in Nepean Bay, Kangaroo Island, where it was very abundant, and I have since ascertained that no species of the genus inhabiting Australia possesses a wider range, for it is almost universally dispersed along the whole line of the southern coast from Swan River on the west to Moreton Bay on the east ; I have also received specimens from New Zealand, which present no perceptible differences.

The Pied Cormorant may be regarded as a gregarious species, many hundreds being sometimes seen in company, particularly in those bays and inlets of the sea whose shores are flat and sandy, and where the tide brings in an abundant supply of fish, upon which the bird almost solely subsists, and in the capture of which it exhibits the same dexterity as the other members of the genus. Its large size and the contrast of its pied plumage render it a most conspicuous bird when seen on the surface of the water, but at no time does it form so prominent an object in the scene as when observed reposing on the sand-banks and low ledges of rock, after having satiated itself with fish, whence it seldom moves until compelled by hunger so to do.

I possess specimens of the eggs which are two inches and a half long and of a pale bluish white, and which were brought from the Three Sisters' Island, about twenty miles southward of Swan River ; I obtained no other particulars respecting its nidification, but Latham states in his " General History " that it breeds in trees.

The sexes are precisely alike in plumage, and also in the brilliant markings of the lores and orbits ; the young of the first autumn differ in having all the upper surface brown, each feather having lighter edges ; the sides of the neck and upper part of the breast are also mottled with brown and white.

Crown of the head, back of the neck, lower part of the back, upper tail-coverts, flanks and thighs deep glossy steel-blue ; all the upper surface and wings deep dull green, each feather with a very narrow margin of velvety black ; primaries and tail deep greenish black ; sides of the face and all the under surface pure white ; irides pale sea-green ; bare space in front of the eye bright orange ; eyelash and naked skin beneath the eye rich indigo-blue ; throat and cheeks light bluish ash ; bill dark horn-colour, becoming lighter at the tip ; legs and feet black.

The Plate represents a male about two-thirds of the natural size.